

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUN 20 1978

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

El Morro

AND/OR COMMON

Inscription Rock

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

El Morro National Monument

CITY, TOWN

Ramah, New Mexico

☒ VICINITY OF☐ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd

STATE

New Mexico

CODE

35

COUNTY

Valencia

CODE

061

**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY**☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☒ SITE☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☐ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE**☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☒ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☒ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

U.S. Government, Department of the Interior, National Park Service

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Southwest Regional Office

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

☐ VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Valencia County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Belen

STATE

New Mexico

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, Theme IV  
"Spanish Exploration and Settlement." Pp. 100-101.

DATE

1959

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

National Park Service, Southwest Regional Office

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe,

STATE

New Mexico

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Rising above a remote and undeveloped valley plain which is covered with native grass and dotted with pinon and juniper trees, El Morro is a sandstone mesa at the base of which are an estimated 2,000 carved inscriptions which date from 1605-1906. In addition to the historic records there are several examples of pre-Columbian petroglyphs. On top of the mesa are two Indian pueblo ruins numbering approximately 250 rooms each. Eighteen rooms of one, Atsinna, have been excavated and stabilized. In a protected angle of the cliff face, a permanent pool, fed by rain and melted snow, served as a water supply for Indians, Spanish explorers, Anglo military expeditions, and wagon trains--and up until 1960, as the water source for the monument.

### MANAGEMENT EXCLUSIONS:

Within El Morro National Monument there are several structures which do not meet National Register criteria. These structures are of recent construction and bear no relationship to the reasons for which the site was included in the National Park system. These exclusions include the residential section of the monument (4 houses, 1 apartment building, and 1 house trailer), the maintenance area, the headquarters building and visitor center, a water tank on top of the mesa, and a wooden foot bridge located between the visitor center and the foot of the mesa. It is recognized that these structures serve a management purpose and occasionally require alterations necessitated by a change in their function. Modifications to these supportive buildings will reflect a compatible architectural style and will not intrude upon the historic resources of the monument.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1605-1906

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

El Morro is a massive mesa-point of sandstone which became a routine stopping place for Spanish conquistadores as well as for later Anglo emigrants and settlers. A prominent geographical landmark on the road between Santa Fe and Zuni pueblos in western New Mexico, it's dependable source of water attracted three centuries of travelers who encamped there and carved their names into the soft rock face. The earliest inscription was incised by Don Juan de Onate in 1605--two years before the founding of Jamestown and fifteen years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth. Following Onate, literally hundreds of visitors to the site inscribed their names, the date, or even verses of poetry to make El Morro a commanding register of three hundred years of European and American exploration and expansion in the southwestern United States.

Don Diego de Vargas, the reconquerer of New Mexico, passed there in 1692, as did Governor Don Feliz Martinez in 1716 and the Bishop of Durango in 1737. Although no dated inscriptions were made between roughly 1750 and 1849, Anglo-Americans who explored the Southwest after 1849, regularly stopped there. In September, 1849, Lieutenant James H. Simpson and the artist R. H. Kern copied the inscriptions and left one of their own. Two years later Captain Lorenzo Sitgreaves, in search of a wagon road to California, passed the rock as did Lieutenant Edward Fitzgerald Beale who was escorting a caravan of camels to California. During the latter decades of the century, travelers continued to leave inscriptions until in 1906, Congress designated the site a national monument.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Lummis, Charles F. Some Strange Corners of Our Country: The Wonderland of the Southwest. New York: Century Co., 1901
- Reed, Erik K. "Spanish Expeditions and El Morro Inscriptions." NPS, 1949
- Slater, John M. El Morro, Inscription Rock New Mexico: The Rock Itself, the Inscriptions Thereon, and the Travelers Who Made Them. Los Angeles: Plantin Press, 1961

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 240

UTM REFERENCES

740-900

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A 12	741030	3880720
B 12	742250	3880720
C 12	741030	3879915
D 12	742250	3879915

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Embracing the S $\frac{1}{2}$  of NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , N $\frac{1}{2}$  of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , and NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of SW $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 6 Township 9 North, Range 14 West, New Mexico Principal Meridian.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dwight T. Pitcaithley

Historian

August 1977

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 728

TELEPHONE

505-988-6501

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe, New Mexico

STATE

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES ☒

NO ☐

NONE ☐

*Thomas W. Merlau* 4-3-78

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ☒ National ☐ State ☐ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

*Chief, Div. of Cultural Resource Mgmt.*

DATE

*6/9/78*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Charles A. Smith*

DATE

*12-18-78*

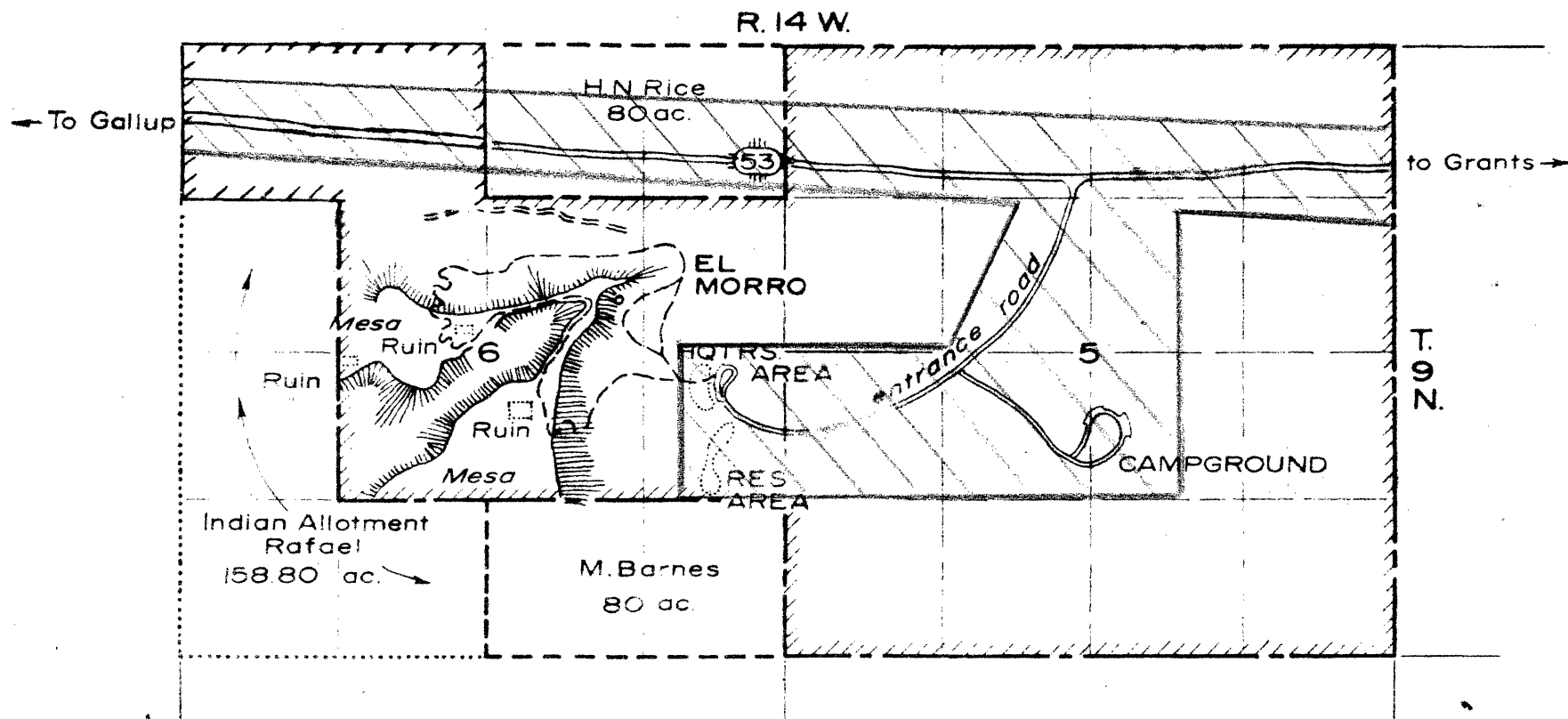
ATTEST:

*Marcella Sherfy*

DATE




*12-18-78*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Area outlined in red to be excluded from Historic Zone.

## LEGEND

-  EXISTING BOUNDARY
-  PROPOSED BOUNDARY
-  AUTHORIZED BOUNDARY  
PL. 539, 81st CONGRESS

EL MORRO  
NATIONAL MONUMENT

## BOUNDARY STATUS REPORT